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finding it impossible at the commencement of the tenth century to overcome the Christians, determined to retire from the country, and signalled their departure by pillaging and destroying Pæstum. In 1080, Robert Guiscard completed the work of destruction by conveying most of the remaining columns and ornaments to Salerno to build a church.

### POLITICAL ASPECT OF CHINA.

BY WILLIAM KNIGHTON, M.A.

THE system of government, prevalent for ages in China, is based upon that of a family. The Chinese constitute the vast family of which the emperor is the father; and, as absolute filial obedience is required by their faith, as the father has absolute power over his children, even so has the emperor absolute authority in the state, the most implicit obedience being required from his officers and subjects. Such a system is often misnamed the patriarchal, but it is quite a misnomer—the foundation of both may be alike, but the practice is quite different. The emperor is styled “the sacred son of heaven,” “the sole ruler of the earth,” “the great father;” offerings are made to his image and to his throne; his person is adored; his people prostrate themselves in his presence. When he goes abroad, all the people take care to shut themselves up in their houses; whoever is found in the monarch’s way is liable to instant execution unless he turns his back, or lies flat with his face upon the ground. The children have evidently no reason to rejoice, under such circumstances, in the visits of their father; his journeys must be rather alarming to travellers. Everything about him partakes of the idolatrous homage paid to himself, whilst the mandarins, who are his delegates in distant provinces, have authority as absolute as his own.

No despotism was ever more unalloyed, no power more absolutely without control than that of this “son of heaven” and yet it was all based upon a mistaken view of the domestic relationship. The language, spoken and written, of China, is an admirably contrived supporter of this state of things; each sign representing an idea, often without any corresponding word, so that a piece of writing, although intelligible to the learned reader, cannot be read aloud to others; and hence the information acquired by the privileged classes has no means of becoming diffused amongst the bulk of the people. Reflection and memory are the only powers called into exercise by this dumb language—the imagination can never be appealed to by it. Even in a Chinese poem, which cannot, of course, be read aloud, the beauty consists in the adaptation of symbol to symbol; it excites no feeling in the breast, it affords no culture to the imagination. “Not a hundredth part of the Chinese characters,” says Remusat, “has any vocal expression, and it is no uncommon thing for the literati of that country to conduct their disputes by describing in the air, with their fans, characters which do not correspond to any word in the language which they speak.” (*Essai sur la Langue Chinoise*, p. 33.) Eminently absurd, we are inclined to call such symbolic argument, and to us it does certainly appear so; but it is eminently note-worthy, by reason of the deductions that may be drawn from the fact, that, if appeals are thus made to the reason and to the memory only, all the fervour of eloquence must be quite thrown away and all the aid of the imagination lost in religious or political addresses.

In the earliest ages of authentic Chinese history, that is, about five hundred years before the Christian era, the country was divided into nine sovereignties, all subsequently united under an enterprising prince named Lo, the Chinese Egbert. For centuries the country, thus united, enjoyed peace and prosperity under its native lords. The intestine tumults were few and far between, and the military art became almost unknown, for there was no foreign aggression to repel. Ghenghis Khan, the great Asiatic conqueror, swept over the country like a whirlwind, carrying everything before him in the thirteenth century; but the Ming or native dynasty was restored subsequently. About a century and a half ago, however, the Ming dynasty was again displaced by the Manchoo invaders from the north-east, whose monarchs have ever since sat upon the Chinese throne. The paternal rod by which China had previously been governed, was heavy and severe enough; but, since then, the whip of the Tartar has been added to the domestic tyranny, until subserviency has superseded obedience. “The despotism of the

Manchoo sovereign,” says Balbi, “keeps that of the grandes in order, and obliges them to remain united. There is no resistance on the part of the people; they have much cunning but little courage, and find it safer to preserve a part of their property by grovelling at the feet of their masters, than to risk the loss of the whole in order to obtain their liberty.” Had Balbi lived in these days, he might have learnt that, however bound down by a foreign yoke, however tyrannised over by foreign rulers, the Chinese had not yet lost their nationality entirely, and were certainly disposed to make a violent effort, and able to make it, to regain their liberty and to shake off the Manchoo rule. Whether they be successful or not remains to be seen—probably they will not be so; yet it must always be remembered, to their honour, that the attempt was made, and that they exhibited in it courage, constancy, and perseverance, not unalloyed, it is true, with cruelty and intolerance. But these are always the vices of the fallen; long-continued slavery produces them naturally in the mind; long-continued, pent-up indignation feeds itself upon blood when it gets the opportunity.

The various civil and military appointments are filled by nine classes of officers, called originally *mandarins*, by the Portuguese, from the Latin verb *mandare*, to command. The power of these officers is, as I have said, absolute, when they are sent by the emperor as his viceroys into the various provinces of the empire. An officer of this description entering a city, can order any person he suspects to be arrested and executed, without giving any further reason for the summary procedure than that noted in his despatch to the High Court of Peking, in which he announces the fact. He is unquestionably a formidable officer. A hundred lictors go before him, announcing his mission with discordant yells. Should any one be found in the way, notwithstanding this announcement, he is mauled with bamboo rods or castigated with heavy whips. It is some consolation to know that the officer himself, who thus has the power of tyrannising at his will, is liable to the same summary punishment he inflicts on others. If tales to his discredit are whispered by influential men in Peking, and come at length to the emperor’s ears, an imperial mandate may, at any moment, arrive, which orders the inferior officers to seize the viceroy, of whom they have been standing so heartily in dread, and to bastinado him soundly. It is likely, under such circumstances, that they would lay it on with hearty good-will.

The redeeming point of all this Chinese government must be mentioned, however. It is this, that these mandarins are not hereditary nobles, born to rule, and brought up in supercilious contempt of all around them, but men who have passed examinations in the classical literature of their country—men versed in such religion, in such mathematics, in such science, in such philosophy, as Chinese wisdom has attained to. Learning is the ladder of nobility, and he has a chance of climbing highest—other things being equal—who has learnt most. From their peculiar system of symbols, this learning, however, is not so powerfully operative for good as it might otherwise be. It is cold and heartless, cultivating the head much, but leaving the warm impulses of the heart unregulated, un nourished, and un replenished from the stores of the imagination. The human mind has many faculties, all of which require simultaneous development to constitute a superior being, ultimately. No one of these faculties can be neglected without evil being induced.

The insurrection which has been threatening for the last year or two to overturn the Manchoo dynasty, and once more place the native line of princes on the throne, excited little attention in England until the intelligence was brought by one of the Indian mails, last autumn, that Nankin had been taken by the rebels. Indistinct rumours of troubles in the southern provinces of the empire had been heard and canvassed in Canton months before. At first, the disturbers were *robbers*, and numerous imperial decrees declared that the leaders of these robbers had been seized, and quartered at Peking, their dismembered limbs being affixed on the gates, and elsewhere, as a warning to evil-doers. But still, all the imperial decrees notwithstanding, the troubles continued, and it was further rumoured, that the descendant of the old Ming family was the head of the insurgents. At length Nankin was taken, and the robbers became, forthwith, *rebels*. Nankin, the centre of the arts, fashions, and literature of China—Nankin, the old capital of the country, was taken. Europeans began then to doubt whether even

imperial proclamations were always to be credited—it was evident, indeed, that they were not. The insurgents advanced; they seized the southern basins of the Great Canal; they commanded the mouths of the Yang-tse-kiang. One imperial army after another was defeated; they threatened Peking itself. They became forthwith *patriots*. Who shall say, after this, that there is nothing in a name? Nothing in a name! robbers and patriots convertible terms! Verily there is much in a name. Success will afford a healing plaster for many wounded consciences; success will blind the eyes of most lookers-on. A man makes a great leap to attain a distant blessing—he fails, and people laugh at his temerity; he succeeds, and they applaud his heroism. Had the Chinese insurrection perished in its first efforts in the South, we should have heard of it only as the troubles caused by a few paltry robbers.

Hien-foung, which, being interpreted, means Complete Abundance, is the present emperor of China, the Mantchoo sovereign who reigns in Peking. He is but twenty-two years of age, “a young man,” says M. Callery, “of middle height, his form indicating great aptitude for bodily exercises. He is slender and muscular, has a high forehead, and a defective obliquity of the eyes,” which latter means, in plain English, that his majesty squints. “His cheek-bones are very prominent, and strongly marked. The space between his eyes is broad and flat, like the forehead of a buffalo.” By no means a flattering simile, M. Callery! for, although Juno was called the ox-eyed, that is no reason why Complete Abundance should be likened to a buffalo. There is little to be added to this sketch of Complete Abundance, save this, that he appears to be always in want of money.

Tien-te, the head of the insurrection, and the representative of the Ming dynasty, is also a young man, only a year or so older than

Complete Abundance. “Study and want of rest,” says M. Callery, “have made him prematurely old. He is grave and melancholy, leads a very retired life, and only communicates with those about him when he gives his orders.” Tien-te means Celestial Virtue; and the cunning Chinese, anxious to obtain the favour of the western barbarians, assured them that this Celestial Virtue was really a Christian at heart, and intended establishing Christianity when he became emperor. The fact of his having thirty wives, however, when it became known, made the Europeans look with suspicion on Celestial Virtue's Christianity, as well they might. So they have left Complete Abundance and him to fight it out, their sympathies, perhaps, being with the insurgents, their diplomatic communication still, however, with the Mantchoo and his officers. Certain it is, that the insurgents have shown no favour whatever to Buddhism, which is the religion of the Mantchoo court, since they have invariably destroyed its temples and images as they have advanced. Whether they intend to restore the system of Confucius, or to amalgamate it with some of the truths of Christianity, does not yet sufficiently appear. They seem to have correct ideas on the subject of the Deity and of his nature, ideas probably obtained from Christian sources. It is almost certain, however, that if they do succeed, the insurgents will settle down into the old political forms; all their sympathies and tendencies seem to point in that direction. Recent accounts leave it doubtful whether they will succeed at all. They have got to within a hundred miles of Peking, having traversed a district of country as extensive as the whole of European Russia. They have been almost uniformly successful hitherto; but the fierce Tartar tribes may possibly be too much for them, if the latest intelligence on the subject is to be credited.

## A VISIT TO THE EAST.

In a recent entertaining work, entitled “Scenes in Eastern Life,” occurs the following amusing episode, which we give without vouching for the strict accuracy of every particular:—

Stanislas Duhamel was a *blasé* Parisian. He had exhausted all the enjoyments of life, and wasted all his energies in the feverish pursuit of pleasure. As a student, a man of fashion, a politician, a mercantile man, and a lieutenant in the National Guards, he had been foremost in all sorts of exciting scenes, till at last, having run the whole round of worldly activity, he sat down like Alexander the Great, and mourned that he had not another career open to him. In his vexation and embarrassment for want of yet one more part to play, one additional scene in the drama of life, he suddenly bethought him of an expedient which promised to answer his purpose admirably. He would go to Constantinople, assume the turban, and become a thorough Mahomedan. He would get a palace with beautiful fountains, a palanquin, with a procession of slaves, etc. etc. As he dwelt upon the bright visions of enjoyment opening up before his mind's eye, his heart throbbed with delight, his jaded emotions once more resumed their intensity, and the exclamation—*La Alla ila, Alla!* burst forth from his lips.

Without delay he was off to Marseilles, and in the course of a week or two landed safely at Constantinople, where he hired a splendid palace, of which the reader may form some conception from our engraving (p. 164). It was surrounded by a court, a garden, fine colonnades, and shady avenues, and had a marble pavement, fountains, arabesques, and whatever else could contribute to elegance or use. The Parisian was delighted with his new abode, which appeared quite a Mahomedan paradise. But before an hour had passed in self-congratulations, he began to feel painfully conscious of some serious defects. In the first place, he did not like the solitude in which he found himself. Then the windows, though artistically formed, were none of them glazed, so that the heat by day and damp by night had free admission, bringing ophthalmia and rheumatism in their train. “We must remedy this,” said he to his dragoman, “by getting some splendid furniture and a company of dancing-girls.” Accordingly, the dragoman went to the nearest bazaar, and the furniture was supplied the same evening. It consisted of sofas made of palm-wood, stuffed with cotton and covered with Persian silk, divans and beds, a small

round table, curtains, mats, caps, pipes and narguilehs. Highly delighted with the way in which he had fulfilled his commission, the dragoman exclaimed: “Here you have furniture fit for the reception of a pasha himself.”

Our hero had also a numerous suite of personal attendants, including a secretary, a treasurer, two cooks, three pipe-bearers, four coffee-servers, five interpreters, and six ass-drivers, not to mention an armour-bearer, a groom to hold his horse, and several extra hands to assist the others. “At any rate,” said he himself, “I shall be well waited on.” Next day, however, his cooks brought him lean chickens hatched in the oven, dog's flesh dressed up as mutton, and dried locusts from Egypt, the whole seasoned to a fiery heat with pepper and mustard. He soon began to find out what it is to be the slave of slaves. Each of his servants being professedly about his appropriate work, and most of them taking their *siesta* in the middle of the day, he could never get their attention when he wanted. If he had occasion for the ass-driver, he stumbled upon the secretary, and *vice versa*. The extra hands were indignant when he asked them to shut the door, or do anything else so far beneath their dignity. His horse was never saddled except for his groom to have a ride. The pipe-bearers and coffee-servers brought him a hundred pipes and as many cups of coffee a-day, that they might regale themselves at his expense. All the neighbours and passers-by came in to squat upon his divans, smoke his tobacco, and taste his mocha coffee. To crown all, the *entente cordiale*, which subsisted between the tradespeople and his servants, was productive of ruinous results.

Unable to endure this any longer, Stanislas determined to put an end to it by turning Turk in real earnest. Off he ran to a barber, who, in little more than a twinkling, completely shaved his head, with the exception of one small tuft of hair on the top of his cranium.

“But why leave this tuft?” he asked.

“For the day when you have your head cut off,” replied the barber. “Every good Mussulman ought to be prepared for that operation, particularly those who were originally Christians, as they rarely escape this fate. Without this tuft for the executioner to lay hold of when he shows your head to the crowd, he would have to take you by the nose—an indignity past all bearing.” The